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North Carolina Baptists returning home

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

North Carolina Baptists on January 12 bade farewell to the Mississippi Gulf Coast, where they have worked and ministered since Hurricane Katrina came ashore nearly two-and-a-half years ago.

Headquartered in the old National Guard Armory in Gulfport during their stay, North Carolina Baptists provided over 30,000 volunteers and more than 1.5 million hours of labor, prepared 575,000 meals, repaired 716 homes, and saw over 420 professions of faith.

At a special Rebuild Celebration at the Armory on January 12, North Carolina Baptist on-site coordinator Eddie Williams told the Gulfport residents in attendance, "We wanted to invite you here to say thank you. Thanks for helping us with the task God put before us. We're going to miss you guys, but you'll always be in our hearts."

"It's not about the bricks and mortar; it's about the lives that have been changed," he said.

Milton Hollifield, executive director-treasurer of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, read from Exodus 3. "God said, 'I am aware of the misery of the people.' We need to remind people that God knows and God cares. That's why He sent Jesus Christ."

"The way we worked together hand in hand, God did more than we could imagine," said Richard Brunson, director of North Carolina Baptist Men.

Referring to Matthew 4:18-22, Brunson said, "The disciples left the comfort of their homes and families to follow Jesus. North Carolina Baptists left the comfort of their homes and jobs to come here for two years (in the name of Jesus)."

As a parting gift from North Carolina Baptists, Brunson presented Gulfport Mayor Brent Warr, a member of First Church, Gulfport, with checks totaling \$60,000 for various public projects around Gulfport.

"Work that you can't hire people to do, North Carolina Baptists came in and did it perfectly. It's a bittersweet situa-



AS WE GO — Richard Brunson (left), Baptist Men Director for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, presents checks totaling \$60,000 to Gulfport Mayor Brent Warr, a member of First Church, Gulfport, during a special Rebuild Celebration on January 12 at the old National Guard Armory in Gulfport. The checks represent gifts from North Carolina Baptists for various projects around Gulfport. North Carolina Baptists, who have been headquartered in the Armory since Hurricane Katrina struck the Coast nearly two-and-a-half years ago, are completing their time on the Coast and heading home. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

IN REMEMBRANCE — Gary (left) and Edith Holland, long-term volunteers from the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, light memorial candles on January 12 at the old National Guard Armory in Gulfport for the 10 homeowners who passed away while North Carolina Baptist volunteers were restoring their homes devastated by Hurricane Katrina. The North Carolinians are wrapping up their long-term operations on the Coast, nearly two-and-a-half years after Katrina came ashore. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)



tion to see friends we depended on moving on, but we know you are moving on to do more good work.

"Four hundred and twenty people won't go to hell because of North Carolina Baptists. If anything ever happens in your neck of the woods, just look up because we're coming," Warr said.

Additional monetary gifts from North Carolina Baptists were presented at a special worship service at First Church, Gulfport, on January 13.

At the January 12 Rebuild Celebration, Chuck Register, pastor of First Church, Gulfport, pointed to the words of Jesus in John 21:15-17. The resurrected Christ asked Peter three times, "Do you truly love me more than these?" Peter replied, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love You," to which Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."

"I'll never read this passage of Scripture without thinking of North Carolina Baptists," Register said. "At every turn you said, 'Yes, Lord, we love You more than these,' because you knew there were sheep who needed tending."

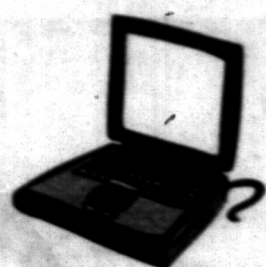
As part of the January 12 Rebuild Celebration, candles were lit in memory of the ten homeowners who passed away while North Carolina Baptists worked to restore their homes. A special prayer garden was also dedicated, at a location on the Armory grounds where rebuild volunteers often retreated for prayer time.

A continuing long-term recovery and rebuilding program is being developed and will be coordinated by the Baptist asso-

ciations along the Gulf Coast. Details on that project will be released soon.

Human cloning moves forward

WASHINGTON (BP) — Scientists in California reportedly have cloned human embryos from adult skin cells, apparently taking a step toward producing personalized, replacement stem cells to treat diseases. Scientists at Stemagen, a stem cell research and development firm in La Jolla, Calif., reported Jan. 17 they had broken a previous barrier by creating, and carefully documenting, for the first time a human embryo clone. They did so by using skin cells from two men, in combination with eggs from women, to produce embryos. It marked the first time cells from adults were used to produce cloned embryos, according to The Washington Post. British researchers developed cloned human embryos into blastocysts in 2005, but they used cells from other human embryos, The Post reported. The clones were made using a method called somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT), a term some scientists prefer to use instead of the word cloning, believing the public will find the former term more acceptable. Dolly the sheep was created using the SCNT method.



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The children of St. Michael

The latest issue of Newsweek magazine contains a haunting article we should all read, the subject of which should serve as both a caution and as an object of prayer. It is the story of the children of St. Michael, a tiny Eskimo village in Alaska so remote in the 1960s that no roads connected it to the rest of the world and there was only one telephone for the whole community. Everyone was poor.

St. Michael was rich in one way, however. Villagers were proud of their children, who whiled away the long days in the colorful berry fields of the frozen tundra or on the ice of the Bering Sea, fishing for the abundant tomcod. In many ways it was an idyllic, if isolated, life.

It was into that setting that the Jesuit order of the Roman Catholic Church sent a number of priests and workers representing the Church, who now stand accused of sexually molesting almost every child in St. Michael over an unbroken string of four decades.

"It is one of the darkest chapters of sexual abuse in the Roman Catholic Church," the Newsweek article states. "More than 110 children in Eskimo villages claim they were molested between 1959 and 1986, raped or assaulted by 12 priests and three church volunteers. Families and victims believe that another 22 people were sexually abused by clergy members but have since killed themselves. The Jesuit Oregon Province, which includes Alaska, has agreed to pay \$50 million in damages. It is believed to be the largest settlement ever against a religious order."

Tom Cheemuk told Newsweek he was one of the victims. Now a 53-year-old



alcoholic, Cheemuk has not only attempted to kill himself because of his anger and shame, he has lost two brothers to suicide and wonders if they too were abused. He alleges he was abused by more than one priest at the same time.

Newsweek also discovered from court filings that one priest covered under the Jesuit settlement is accused of fathering four children and encouraging a 16-year-old girl to have an abortion, which she did. Another priest allegedly impregnated a young girl, then pressured her to blame it on her father and have an abortion.

"These priests had abused elsewhere and then were unleashed in the most uncontrolled environment," Patrick Wall told Newsweek. Wall is a former Benedictine monk and Catholic priest who served as a consultant to attorneys in the Alaska suits.

The story of the children of St. Michael should serve as a caution to us, because the same thing could happen to Mississippi

Baptists. Don't be shocked, and don't avert your eyes in disbelief. There is presently at least one Mississippi Baptist church in a similar (but not identical) situation, and there are probably others.

Think about it. Is there a more "target-rich" environment for pedophiles than our churches? Is there another place where more children gather in greater numbers under the trusting supervision of adults? How well do you know the adults to whom you entrust your church's children? How well do you know them, really?

At your Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, every employee is required to undergo a background check during the hiring process. That's because most convention board employees have contact with children at some time in the course of their jobs. It's not a foolproof process, but it sure beats doing nothing — and nothing is what too many of our churches are doing.

The leaders of every church in the Mississippi Baptist Convention should consult with their attorney to put together a legal system for checking everyone who works with the church's children. The thousands of legitimate children's workers will not be offended by being a part of a system that screens out the few predators who would take advantage of a church's trust.

Not doing so can be devastating. Not many churches have \$50 million to settle lawsuits, but there's an even greater cost.

"You see the alcoholism, the severe mental problems, people in and out of jail," an attorney who has handled many of the Alaska cases told Newsweek, "and you wonder, how do you put Humpty Dumpty back on the wall?"

The fact is you can't. That's why we should be praying for the children of St. Michael, and ensuring that all the children in our Mississippi Baptist churches are as safe as they can be. Start today.

GUEST OPINION:



What God can do

By Ronnie Hill
Ft. Worth, Texas

Sandra was a 17-year-old girl who was with her mom and dad on a fall vacation visiting family friends. The friends they were visiting had an 18-year-old son. When all the family members were gone, he lured her into the utility room of their home where he raped her. Sandra did not tell anyone about this because she thought it was her fault.

As a result of the rape, she became pregnant. Many people in our society no doubt would tell her, "You need to have an abortion. You do not need to go through this. You are only 17," but even though Sandra had been violated and raped, she did not want to kill the life living inside her. She chose to have the baby.

Nine months later, she had a six-and-a-half pound baby boy — me.

My life verse is Genesis 50:20, which says, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives."

I gave my life to Jesus when I was eight years old and surrendered to the call God placed on my life at the age of 14 to preach the Gospel. I have been traveling in evangelism now

for 20 years, telling people all over the world about Jesus.

I am not here on this planet by accident, and neither are the people we share with every week. Every embryo that is conceived was formed and created by a loving God. We are valuable to Him, and He has an incredible plan for each life. Life should not and must not be stopped by a selfish human being, because God has a greater purpose.

God did not cause that evil deed to happen to my mom. That was one man's depraved mind and willful sin, but God turned it for the good in my life and in my mom's life. I know there are many people that feel this statement is a cliché, espe-

cially when they are in the midst of tremendous pain, but the Bible says in Romans 8:28: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose."

When I was three, my mom married a man named Jamie who adopted me and my brother Allen. Jamie is my real dad, and I would have no other. As an eight-year-old boy, I began to pray for my dad to be saved. I did not want him to go to hell.

Two years later, God orchestrated some events that brought my dad to church with us four Sundays in a row. The final Sunday he gave his life to Christ. Another two years later, God called my dad to preach.

My dad is now pastor of Cowboy Church of Brazoria, Texas, where hundreds of people have been saved under his ministry — not to mention the fact that God called me to preach under my dad's ministry when I was 14.

God turns everything around for His good and perfect will.

As a result of my mom Sandra giving me life, I have shared my testimony all over the world with many women and girls who have been touched by our story. Many have come up to me and shared that they were pregnant and were thinking about having an abortion but changed their minds because God spoke to them through my story to have the courage to continue the pregnancy.

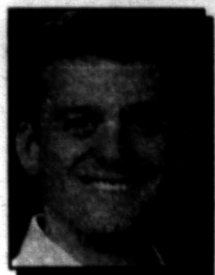
"You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives" (Genesis 50:20).

God is good. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

For information on Hill's ministry, visit www.ronniehill.com. This article first appeared in SBC Life, journal of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee.

Analysis: Approach Mormons with caution, facts, love

Final in a series



By Mike Licona
Correspondent

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP) — There is no need to be defensive or hostile to Mormon missionaries who come to your door. I have always found them to be intelligent, honest, and cordial people who need an equally sincere Christian to share the truth with them lovingly.

Do not view them as enemies, but as dedicated people who have been misled. Love them. Pray for them. You can make a difference.

Mormon missionaries have had the door slammed in their faces more times than they can count and have heard weak attempts to refute their beliefs. Dare to be different! Remember that people do not care how much you know until they know how much you care.

Here are a few suggestions you may use when meeting with Mormons:

Set the agenda

Mormon missionaries have several presentations, they would like to share with you. I recommend that you, not they, start the conversation by admitting that since no one is 100% accurate about everything they believe, it is possible that you could be wrong on some things you believe. Tell them that you are satisfied with being a Christian but are open-minded and would like to discuss some issues concerning their beliefs that are bothersome to you.

Ask them what it would take to convince them that Mormonism is false. When they say there is nothing, ask them, "What if the gold plates from which Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon were someday discovered and translated by 20 professional Egyptologists and if their transla-

tion bore no resemblance to the Book of Mormon, would that make you seriously consider that maybe Mormonism is false?"

Most will agree that these would certainly make them think long and hard.

Bible is reliable

This is important. According to those who have devoted their lives to helping Mormons find the truth about Mormonism, many times when a person leaves Mormonism they become skeptical because they include the Bible with their other scriptures as unreliable. Once they see that their own scriptures are not from God, they may assume the Bible is not either.

Take the time to show them that the Bible is trustworthy. This gives them a solid place to go when they leave the Mormon Church.

Archaeology, history

Since you have discussed the trustworthiness of the Bible with them, they will now be able to see a big difference between the Bible and the Book of Mormon. They will be shocked to find that Mormon archaeologists from Brigham Young University, a Mormon-sponsored school in Utah, have admitted that unambiguous archaeology concerning the Book of Mormon is nonexistent.

Evidence

In my own experience, I have found that Mormons have very little to say in their defense after the above has been pointed out, except that God has confirmed in their hearts that Mormonism is true. In this series, we have noted that feelings can be misleading and actually prove nothing. Since you and your Mormon friend both have feelings that your beliefs are true, external evidence is the only test — and Mormonism fails to pass.

In conclusion, when Mormons knock on your door, embrace the opportunity. Show yourself to be a loving and knowledgeable Christian. The object is not to win an argument but to try to lead a sincere person to the truth. Therefore, present the evidence in a patient and loving manner.

The Apostle Paul wrote: "And the Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to

all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will" (2 Tim. 2:24-26 NASB).

Christianity is trustworthy because the text of the Bible is pure and much of it is confirmed by archaeology and secular history. We also have the proof from Jesus' resurrection.

When you consider Mormon doctrines such as the plurality of gods, God having been once a man, man becoming a god, Jesus created by God, an afterlife much different than Jesus describes, and various salvation requirements, Mormonism presents a gospel much different than we find in the Bible. Therefore, the Apostle Paul's words in Galatians 1:8-9, KJV, may very well apply: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so I say now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

These are sober words for Mormons, who are not in a position to be confident of their own salvation. They are zealous for God, but so were the Jews Paul wrote about in Romans 10:1-2 when he prayed for their salvation.

Mormons believe in Jesus but so did the Gnostics, the heretics of the early church who, like Mormons today, taught a concept of God and Jesus that was fundamentally different than what the Apostles taught. They do great works in the name of Christ, but so did those of whom Jesus spoke of in Matthew 7:21-23, saying, "I never knew you."

Many Mormons have been brought up in the Mormon Church and it is difficult to jettison what one has believed his or her entire life. Encourage the Mormons with whom you are sharing to pray and think about their personal situation.

It is their souls that are on the line.

Licona is director of apologetics and inter-faith evangelism at the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention in Alpharetta, Ga. This article has been edited for length. For full article with end note, visit <http://www.sbcabaptistpress.org/bpnews.asp?id=27038>. Licona's analysis appears courtesy of Baptist Press. Read additional free articles on Mormonism and related topics at www.4truth.net.

Quite a turnaround

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. (BP) — What a difference two years and the Hand of God can make. In October 2005, the building at 1837 East Cherry Street in Springfield, Mo., was home to the Springfield Healthcare Center, one of four abortion providers in Missouri. Fast forward to December 2007, and 1837 East Cherry Street — once a house of darkness and death — is now the Springfield office of the Missouri Baptist Children's Home. "God has taken a building that was used to destroy life and given it over to help restore the family and give children hope and healing," said David Burch, office director. "It's one of those things only God could do." When Gov. Matt Blunt signed a bill in September 2005 that required abortion providers to obtain hospital privileges within 30 miles of their clinics, the Springfield abortion clinic was soon forced to close its doors since its doctor, who commuted from St. Louis, did not have local hospital privileges. "I would have never guessed when I prayed that our ministry was out of space, I would never in my wildest imagination (thought) He would do it with a former abortion clinic," Burch said. "It's just like Ephesians 3:20 says, 'Now to Him who is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think — according to the power that works in you.'" The Missouri Baptist Children's Home's Springfield offices offer a variety of community-based services including recruiting and developing Christian foster and adoptive parents, therapeutic foster care, traditional "family" foster care, family reunification services and a transitional living service for older teens. In total, they work with about 120 children at a time. "We are very blessed and very excited," Burch said of the new facility. "Because of the cramped conditions, we had no way to do everything in one place. It's incredibly nice now to have rooms set up for child and family visits, conferences, all at the same time."

Looking back

10 years ago

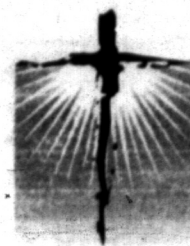
Mississippi Baptists present God With Us Jan. 19 at the Mississippi Coliseum, Jackson, with a choir of over 2000 voices, an orchestra of over 140, plus soloists and testimonies.

20 years ago

At a banquet in Jackson, campaign manager Harry Vickery of Greenville announces the successful completion of The Mississippi Mission, an endowment campaign for Mississippi Baptist institutions. The total in gifts and pledges for the four year campaign stands at \$40,870,000.

50 years ago

Up to 1,000 are expected at the annual State Evangelism Conference, First Church, Gulfport, Feb. 10-12, according to Joe T. Odle, associate executive secretary of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

THE SECOND
FRONT PAGE

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**YOU CAN RESPOND
RIGHT NOW!**

*Simply share the following prayer
with God in your own words:*

1. Lord, I admit that I need you.
(I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my
sins and freedom from eternal
death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose
from the grave to forgive my
sins and to restore my rela-
tionship with you.
(I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus
Christ into my life. From this
time on, I want to live in a
loving relationship with Him.
(I receive Christ as my Savior
and Lord.)

*"But as many as received him,
to them he gave the right to become
children of God, even to those who
believe in his name." (John 1:12)*

*If you make a decision for
Jesus Christ today, contact a local
Baptist church for spiritual
guidance.*

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TO THE TOP OF THE WORLD

Sir Edmund Hillary died January 9, 2008. He was 88 years old and forever will be remembered for the one crowning achievement in his life when he climbed to the top of the world. Sir Edmund was the very first person ever to arrive at the pinnacle of Mount Everest. What an incredible achievement this was and what wonderful lessons can be learned from someone like him.

We can learn lessons in initiative. Can you imagine thinking about, preparing, planning, and then attempting to do what no one has ever done before? It is not just a matter of having a vision and reaching out there to do something. It is also struggling with all of the people who tell you that you cannot do it or put you down for even attempting to try. While no one else had ever done it before, he set out to reach the top of the world. We all live with different scales than the Sir Edmund Hillary's of the world, but we all have those things that we face that need to be addressed and need to be attempted and yet sometimes within us we pull back and even when we start to step forward, we pause, delay, and succumb. There are people who say, "You can't do that or you do not even need to try to do that." Instead of reaching the summit, we often fail before we start. The march of



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

the human race whether it is upward, outward, or onward is marked by the names of the people with initiative. It is marked by the people who are willing to step out, look up, and reach beyond where anyone else has ever touched, and gone. They are the pioneers, the explorers, and the people with unbridled initiative who would move to touch the top of their world whether it is in music, science, medicine, theology, missions, or mathematics. They saw what maybe other people could see, but then they went there.

The second grand lesson that comes from the Sir Edmund Hillary's of the world has to do with inspiration. I never met Sir Edmund Hillary, but strangely I have often thought of him, read about him, and been inspired by his achievement. I have never been to the top of Mount Everest, and I am confident that I will never get there, but literally, thousands and thousands of others have followed the trail that he opened. Just the mention of his name evokes sparks of inspira-

tion. Now to be sure, Sir Edmund Hillary never strutted over his achievement. By all accounts, he remained humbled by what he had done and he and those around him ignited a flame of inspiration in generations of people who wanted to climb higher.

One of the stories that is so often told about Sir Edmund Hillary was not about him at all. He said that when he came down from Mount Everest word had been sprinkled among the media that he actually was not the first person to get to the summit and that one of the guides had actually preceded to the very top first. After some time of interview and questions and answers, one of the reporters asked if they could interview one of the Sherpa guides that had gone with him. It was permitted, and the guide came to the podium. He was confronted with the question, "Was Sir Edmund Hillary the first person to get to the top of the mountain or was someone else ahead of him?" The guide responded with wisdom and grace by saying something to the effect that "No man can get to the top of the world by himself."

Another lesson that comes from this man of great achievement has to do with influence. How many people have been influenced by him to do greater things, go higher, deeper, further, or do better than ever before? Only one person can be the first person to get to the top of the world. There are mountains and hills all around the landscape of your life and mine. Not at every turn and every decision does Sir Edmund Hillary come to my mind, but there are occasions when I have thought about him and was

moved to go ahead and to reach for the pinnacle, to keep on climbing, and get to the top of the mountain. For you and me it may be a decision, a project, and a work that we feel that God has led us to, something that will take our very best and in turn will touch the lives of people around us.

In Revelation, the Scripture tells us that once we are with the Lord that our works continue. Specifically it says, "Their works do follow them" (Rev. 14:13). It is pretty amazing to think about influence and how far reaching and significant it is. Within a period of about 20 seconds, I could name off a dozen people who have made a world of difference in my life and whose influence was monumental to me, but whose names would probably not be recognized by anyone. It is also interesting that they probably did not know that their influence related to me was so great, and what is equally interesting is that probably for a period of time, possibly a long period of time, I did not realize how deeply they influenced my life. Teachers, preachers, coaches, business people, farmers, friends, fellow workers, and even antagonists have touched my life with influence for good.

There are, of course, those who climb to the top of the mountain who in turn we want to know, study, emulate, and follow, and so they become prominent in our thinking day by day. For me, as I know for many of you, that singular one, who climbed a mountain and made the greatest difference in our lives, is not Sir Edmund but our Savior Jesus. While it was quite an achievement when Sir Edmund Hillary climbed the 29,000+ ft. high Mount Everest, our Lord going to Mount Calvary reached all the way to heaven for us, opened the door, and invited all of us to come and join Him. To paraphrase an often heard or seen commercial, "Come on Mississippi, let's go mountain climbing!"

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HOUSE TOPS

Matthew 10:27 NAS

January 24, 2008

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Communication Services.

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January 25 – February 7, 2008

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'Patient, persevering, believing prayer, offered up to God, in the Name of the Lord Jesus, has always, sooner or later, brought the blessing. I do not despair, by God's grace of obtaining any blessing, provided I can be sure it would be for any real good, and for the glory of God.'

George Muller, WITH CHRIST IN THE SCHOOL OF PRAYER by Andrew Murray

Pray for the Bhana people of India and Pakistan. There are about 3.5 million Bhana people who do not know Jesus Christ as their Savior. Pray that all of them will hear the truth and come to know Him as God.

Pray for the Hindus of India. Hindus worship many different gods and goddesses but not the heavenly Father. Please pray that the Hindus of Kolkata will discover the only true God and His Son, Jesus. And, pray for the Christians of India who are under attack from extreme Hindu factions.

(1) Baptist Doctrine Study, Central Hills Baptist Retreat (D&FM); (2) The small town in the heart of Shan Odi Christian outreach now boasts the completion of the area's tallest Buddhist temple. Please pray that the Buddhist going to the temple will come to know Christ, instead.

(1) Transitional Pastor Training, Baptist Building, 4th - 7th (CMR); (2) Pray for churches who are without a pastor. Pray for God's guidance for their Pastor Search Committees as they seek to find God's choice to shepherd their congregations.

(1) Baptist Doctrine Study, Jackson Association Office, Pascagoula (D&FM); (2) The Madinka believers in West Africa are small in number. Intercede for a Madinka pastor who feels called to go encourage Madinka believers scattered across the Gambia, Senegal and Guinea-Bissau.

(1) VBS Jumpstart, Liberty BC, Flowood; (2) Missionaries Clyde and Carol Schulz have been teaching with narratives and discipling new believers at Mission Esperanca in Belem, Brazil. Pray for LG, the pastor who oversees this mission, and ask that God will send a fulltime local pastor.

Pray for the seven departments/states in Uruguay where less than 1 percent of the population is evangelized. This means that fewer than 4,300 people of the 430,000 in these areas know Christ. Pray for the light of Christ to begin shining in these areas of darkness.

(1) Baptist Building AT HOME DAYS, 6th - 8th; (2) Missionaries Sharon Cook and Helen Hardeman are reaching out to the upper middle class women in Guatemala City, Guatemala. Pray that the friendships developed will result in new Bible study groups and witnessing opportunities.

(1) Baptist Doctrine Study, Camp Garaywa, Clinton (D&FM); (2) Mississippi Baptist Church Music Conference, FBC, Natchez, Jan. 31-Feb. 2 (CM); (3) Pray for the MBCB department directors as they seek to know God's heart on how to best reach their target audiences.

Pray that the home group in Villa San Sebastian, Colima, Mexico, will grow and become a church. Team Colima has been training M as a leader of the group. Pray that the Lord will continue to guide him in the sound doctrine of the faith.

(1) Area Keyboard Festivals: FBC, Vancleave; Cartersville BC, Petal; Hernando BC, Hernando; (2) Pray for missionaries from China, Latin America and North America who are interested in joining the Chinese Team of Panama in reaching the Chinese population of Panama.

(1) Area Keyboard Festivals: North Greenwood BC, Greenwood; Emmanuel BC, Grenada; (2) 20% of Moscow, Russia, is Muslim. A small church in Moscow has started printing materials to distribute among them. Pray that God will continue to multiply those who are reaching out to this group.

"... I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority ..." (1 Timothy 2:1-2). Please pray today for President Denis Sassou-Nguesso of Republic of the Congo (western Africa, north of Angola).

55+ Ministries

"Still Bear Fruit in Old Age"
Psalm 92:14

2008 55 Plus Leadership Lab

Tuesday, March 4 / Camp Garaywa, Clinton / 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Cost: \$10 includes meals (Deadline to register is Feb. 25.)
\$5 at the door (no meals included)

To register call Glenn Shows or Debbie Brashier at the MBCB, 601-292-3373, 1-800-748-1651, or E-mail Glenn at gshows@mbcb.org or Debbie at dbrashier@mbcb.org.

This leadership lab is for all leaders of 55 plus adults, officers, Sunday School teachers, ministers, etc. Handouts will be available.

- 9 a.m. Registration and refreshments
- 9:30 a.m. Welcome - "Seniors on Mission with God"
Bob Jackson, Director of Senior Missions Lab, NOBTS
- 10:30 a.m. Break
- 10:45 a.m. Eileen Wright, Alabama Baptist Convention Senior Adult Consultant
- noon Lunch
- 1 p.m. Panel Discussions with Bob and Eileen
- 2 p.m. Adjourn

MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST 2008 Christian Education Clinics



Highland Baptist Church, Meridian
February 9, 2008

&
Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Madison
March 8, 2008

It is the desire of Mississippi Baptists to offer quality training for those who affect the lives of Mississippi's most precious citizens. Please make plans to attend the 2008 clinic of your choice. If you have any questions, please call the numbers listed below.

Susie McNair, clinic coordinator - Christian Education Clinics
Tel: 601.954.8650; E-mail: gsmcnair@yahoo.com

REGISTRATION REQUIRED BY JAN. 31 FOR MERIDIAN AND FEB. 28 FOR MADISON
MBCB Discipleship and Family Ministry Department
Tel: 601.292.3287; 1-800-748-1651, ext. 287; E-mail: dhicks@mbcb.org

LEE			
AUBURN	52,174.18	17,094.00	69,268.18
BARNES CROSSING	704.08	257.61	961.69
BELDEN	43,459.41	30,601.74	74,061.15
BETHANY	400.00	3,200.00	3,600.00
BIRMINGHAM RIDGE	2,000.00	2,700.00	4,700.00
BUSSELL	5,569.45	4,295.64	9,865.09
DESSARD	21,412.98	13,215.34	36,628.32

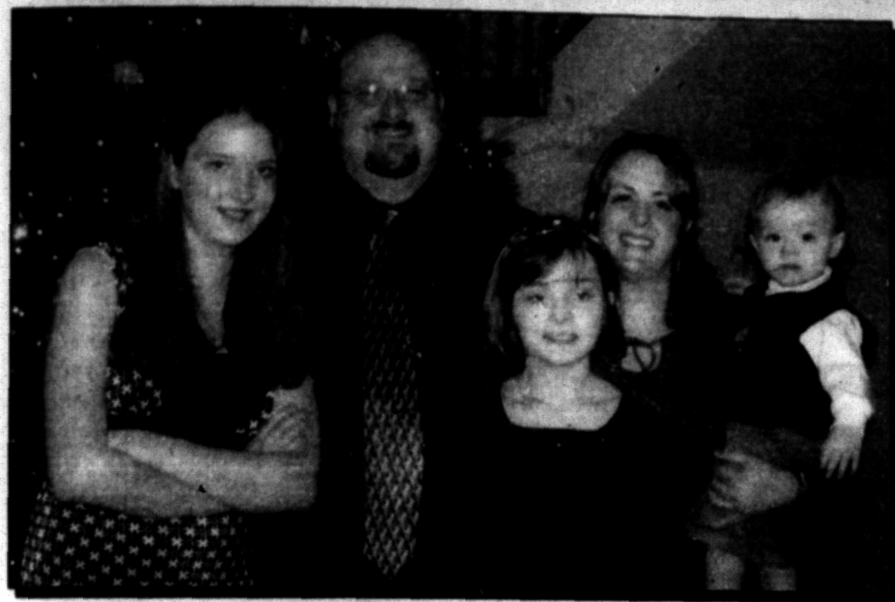
Total	261,940.33	216,423.06	478,363.39
METRO			
ALTA WOODS	39,498.25	43,997.56	83,495.81
BETHESDA	15,963.84	12,791.78	28,755.62
BELLHAI MEMORIAL	13,665.12	6,299.70	19,964.82
BOLTON	8,507.00	5,569.98	14,076.98
BRIARWOOD DRIVE	519,268.54	6,032.22	525,300.76
BURBANK	519,268.54	232,020.52	751,289.07
CALVARY CANTON	400.00	1,865.00	2,265.00
CALVARY JACKSON	660.00	13,538.50	14,198.50
CAMDEN	2,725.17	150.00	2,875.17
CENTER TERRACE	19,286.16	9,999.71	29,285.87
CHITRAL	2,116.13	2,518.26	4,634.39
CHAPEL HILL	454.04	1,816.16	2,270.20
COLONIAL HEIGHTS	293,158.82	79,315.91	372,474.73
COUNTRY WOODS	44,000.00	20,140.00	64,140.00
CRAMFORD NEW LIFE CH	2,365.00	-	2,365.00
DAMASCUS	2,471.00	700.34	3,171.34
DANFORTH MEMORIAL	24,383.55	9,943.19	34,326.74
DAVIS ROAD	240.81	1,257.41	2,498.22
EAGLE RIDGE COMM	6,099.46	205.00	6,304.46
EDWARDS	9,600.84	9,033.00	18,633.84
FAITH JACKSON	7,550.84	10,188.47	17,739.31
FARMVIEW	453.08	6,351.21	6,804.29
FARMHAVEN	4,660.51	4,851.37	9,511.88
FRIC BYRAM	24,507.86	22,400.93	46,908.79
FRIC CANTON	20,805.27	38,247.52	59,052.79
FRIC CLINTON	27,658.20	144,862.74	172,520.94
FRIC FLORENCE	59,393.44	59,393.44	118,786.88
FRIC FLORENCE	88,665.30	59,393.44	148,058.74
FRIC MADISON	244,741.20	157,098.33	401,839.53
FRIC RAYMOND	90,000.00	42,286.65	132,286.65
FRIC RIDGELAND	21,563.45	5,992.25	27,555.70
FRIC TERRY	60,034.99	33,068.86	93,103.85
GOOD HOPE	1,988.00	2,965.33	4,953.33
GOOD HOPE	1,988.00	277.02	2,265.02
GRIFFITH MEMORIAL	21,817.57	21,430.25	43,247.82
HIGHLAND	10,457.52	3,980.26	14,437.78
HIGHLAND COLONY	77,123.80	34,568.00	111,691.80
HIGHPOINTE	-	1,600.00	1,600.00
LAKEVIEW	7,800.00	10,074.09	17,874.09
LAKE SHORE	11,931.74	5,514.84	17,446.58
LEARNED	1,547.27	1,448.57	2,995.84
LONE PINE	796.86	985.88	1,782.74
LONGVIEW	17,752.00	5,029.00	22,781.00
MORRISON HEIGHTS	451,414.59	243,144.44	694,559.03
NEW HAVEN	859.20	429.76	1,288.96
NEW LIFE FELLOWSHIP	-	350.00	350.00
NORTHMINSTER	2,705.76	57,000.00	59,705.76
ORCHARD	1,090.00	-	1,090.00
OAK FOREST	32,891.84	22,902.13	55,793.97
OAKVIEW	65.63	1,696.86	1,762.49
OLD RICE ROAD	2,240.28	4,089.99	6,330.27
OLD VICKSBURG ROAD	4,316.93	1,295.09	5,612.02

NESHOB			
ANTIOCH	26,891.00	23,182.00	50,075.00
BACON STREET	2,700.00	8,371.25	14,077.25
BEAT LINE	1,450.00	5,363.40	5,013.40
BETHSAIDA	7,003.36	15,467.33	22,470.69
BUFF SPRINGS	200.00		200.00
BURTON	3,153.50	6,534.44	9,687.94
COLDWATER	2,028.36	4,466.75	6,495.11
COUNTY LINE	2,692.52	21,625.24	24,317.76
CROSS ROADS	600.00	809.00	1,409.00
EAST PHILADELPHIA	35,907.84	21,048.86	57,956.70
EAST PHILADELPHIA	69,477.86	47,477.86	116,955.72
EDGE OF HOPE	31,924.94	12,349.48	44,274.42
GRACE	31,756.70	19,873.99	49,630.69
HERBERT	450.00	950.18	1,400.18
HIGH HILL	3,869.46	6,676.39	10,545.85
HIGHWAY	1,800.00	7,442.40	9,242.40
LAUREL HILL	6,126.81	2,830.00	8,956.81
LINWOOD	4,549.19	950.00	5,499.19
LONGINO	1,400.00	1,890.00	3,290.00
MIT CARMEL	200.00	2,142.00	2,342.00
MILKSON	768.00	1,966.47	2,734.47
NESHOB	19,170.16	17,512.31	36,682.47
NEW BETHEL	5,600.00	4,975.41	10,575.41
NEW BLACK JACK		200.00	200.00
NEW HARMONY	2,258.00	3,529.41	5,787.41
NEW LEBANON	2,258.00	1,067.41	3,325.41
NORTH CALVARY	7,850.27	9,164.63	17,014.90
OAK GROVE	1,500.46	1,666.47	3,166.93
OLD PEARL VALLEY	11,042.06	19,140.06	30,182.12
PINE GROVE	10,992.00	18,974.00	29,966.00

PEARL RIVER ASSOCIATION		2,250.00	2,750.00
BETHLE	20,591.52	1,784.25	3,175.48
CENTRAL	24,990.27	1,950.68	4,341.14
CORINTH	4,424.17	1,397.80	5,822.15
CRANE CREEK	4,16,389.04	6,330.45	22,716.49
DEBBY	4,416.67	6,642.21	11,058.11
FAITH	349.59	349.59	1,028.16
FAITH MEMORIAL	4,410.00	1,200.00	1,200.00
FBC CARRIERS	5,850.00	7,726.03	13,776.03
FBC NICHOLSON	3,000.00	1,590.71	4,990.71
FBC ROMA	4,416.11	8,000.00	12,416.11
FBC ROCKY HILL	198,214.56	100,586.39	298,800.95
FBC POPP ARVILLE	65,038.81	74,243.31	139,282.12
FIRST CORNSTONE	360.00		720.00
FLAT TOP UNITY	2,608.46	4,515.30	7,123.76
FORDS CREEK	10,185.00	4,342.50	10,113.50
GODDARD	11,048.11	4,342.50	15,390.61
GUM POND	8,121.22	6,206.14	14,327.36
HARMONY	7,403.66	1,502.62	8,906.28
HILL CREST	4,607.69	8,318.72	12,926.41
IMPERIAL GROVE	17,188.17	17,418.14	34,606.31
IMPERIAL HILLFIELD	1,788.89	4,117.17	5,906.06
NEW PALESTINE	22,506.39	20,226.91	42,733.30
OAK HILL	9,019.95	8,082.51	17,112.46
OLIVE	9,023.00	6,679.00	15,702.00
PARKVIEW	4,110.36	7,642.92	11,753.28
PINE GROVE	59,820.00	32,093.50	91,913.50

	COOP PROGRAM	OTHER	TOTAL
BETHLEHEM	4,073.11	1,217.32	5,290.43
BETHLEHEM	2,903.62	11,211.51	14,115.13
BETHLEHEM	5,213.33	16,259.07	21,472.40
BETHLEHEM	9,016.48	12,242.08	21,258.56
BETHLEHEM	1,494.88	1,724.18	3,219.06
BETHLEHEM	20,248.80	8,809.48	29,058.28
BETHLEHEM	37,499.94	1,260.88	38,760.82
BETHLEHEM	227.00	1,260.88	1,487.88
BETHLEHEM	131,574.39	47,247.10	178,821.49
BETHLEHEM	2,946.02	3,967.22	6,913.24
BETHLEHEM	5,049.16	1,688.00	6,737.16
BETHLEHEM	16,775.88	3,180.29	19,956.17
BETHLEHEM	7,331.00	1,260.88	8,591.88
BETHLEHEM	49,847.01	19,345.75	69,192.76
BETHLEHEM	6,510.66	4,559.00	11,069.66
BETHLEHEM	10,487.89	2,959.00	13,446.89
BETHLEHEM	4,613.91	20,945.58	25,559.49
BETHLEHEM	9,249.25	4,073.11	13,322.36
BETHLEHEM	100,171.74	46,727.18	146,898.92
BETHLEHEM	33,272.11	2,007.00	35,279.11
BETHLEHEM	6,113.09	19,948.33	26,061.42
BETHLEHEM	1,500.00	7,187.33	8,687.33
BETHLEHEM	18,464.48	24,920.84	43,385.32
BETHLEHEM	26,817.70	4,161.19	30,978.89
BETHLEHEM	18,192.82	1,816.16	19,998.98
BETHLEHEM	23,599.06	41,170.00	64,769.06
BETHLEHEM	4,161.19	2,959.00	7,120.19
BETHLEHEM	281,886.85	6,180.67	288,067.52
BETHLEHEM	16,110.83	6,180.67	22,291.50
BETHLEHEM	1,401.15	1,140.00	2,541.15
BETHLEHEM	6,000.00	1,772.00	7,772.00
BETHLEHEM	11,258.00	6,198.00	17,456.00
BETHLEHEM	45,028.09	21,725.24	66,753.33
BETHLEHEM	800.00	800.00	1,600.00
BETHLEHEM	4,895.99	1,660.00	6,555.99
BETHLEHEM	5,269.10	7,277.07	12,546.17
BETHLEHEM	30,043.80	21,099.36	51,143.16
BETHLEHEM	16,004.45	1,848.40	17,852.85
BETHLEHEM	210.00	2,237.22	2,447.22
BETHLEHEM	249.85	3,130.56	3,380.41
BETHLEHEM	17,501.85	1,826.38	19,328.23
BETHLEHEM	146,319.75	60,552.38	206,872.13
BETHLEHEM	3,600.00	2,961.00	6,561.00
BETHLEHEM	723.00	498.00	1,221.00
BETHLEHEM	17,072.26	7,068.11	24,140.37
BETHLEHEM	1,807,339.86	722,656.26	2,529,996.12
YALOWHUMA			
BETHLEHEM	20,089.00	16,041.98	36,130.98
BETHLEHEM	1,814.00	1,670.00	3,484.00
BETHLEHEM	1,503.33	2,423.60	3,926.93
BETHLEHEM	354.22	70.00	424.22
BETHLEHEM	135.00	2,831.67	2,966.67
BETHLEHEM	27,544.00	14,247.87	41,791.87
BETHLEHEM	50,000.00	175,402.80	225,402.80
BETHLEHEM	764.73	1,592.63	2,357.36
BETHLEHEM	420.00	1,500.00	1,920.00
BETHLEHEM	4,377.00	3,370.05	7,747.05
BETHLEHEM	1,926.74	1,496.37	3,423.11
BETHLEHEM	17,868.66	9,220.31	27,088.97
BETHLEHEM	6,445.02	6,050.74	12,495.76
BETHLEHEM	3,134.25	2,943.75	6,078.00
BETHLEHEM	400.00	1,260.88	1,660.88
BETHLEHEM	143,725.30	248,114.74	391,840.04
YAZOO			
BETHLEHEM	1,500.00	1,551.76	3,051.76
BETHLEHEM	10,499.96	7,550.00	18,049.96
BETHLEHEM	10,126.48	7,011.00	17,137.48
BETHLEHEM	7,789.00	3,451.00	11,240.00
BETHLEHEM	15,992.00	18,432.74	34,424.74
BETHLEHEM	2,245.63	4,147.14	6,392.77
BETHLEHEM	10,677.19	11,015.44	21,692.63
BETHLEHEM	18,471.50	6,480.00	24,951.50
BETHLEHEM	17,578.00	1,265.00	18,843.00
BETHLEHEM	600.00	1,484.00	2,084.00
BETHLEHEM	9,280.10	1,055.00	10,335.10
BETHLEHEM	8,821.74	1,055.00	9,876.74
BETHLEHEM	66,816.15	80,102.00	146,918.15
BETHLEHEM	18,464.48	1,020.00	19,484.48
BETHLEHEM	9,125.76	3,242.67	12,368.43
BETHLEHEM	9,952.67	7,168.00	17,120.67
BETHLEHEM	9,619.42	4,166.50	13,785.92
BETHLEHEM	13,858.57	4,991.50	18,850.07
BETHLEHEM	464.23	280.92	745.15
BETHLEHEM	1,554.81	740.00	2,294.81
BETHLEHEM	2,765.00	4,583.00	7,348.00
BETHLEHEM	6,857.80	4,912.33	11,770.13
BETHLEHEM	234,313.22	176,104.18	410,417.40
AT LARGE			
BETHLEHEM	150.64	6,000.00	6,000.00
BETHLEHEM	429.15	264.74	693.89
BETHLEHEM	1.40	439.14	439.14
BETHLEHEM	1,535.69	2,002.50	3,538.19
BETHLEHEM	1,000.00		1,000.00
BETHLEHEM	1,303.00	955.00	2,258.00
BETHLEHEM	1,800.00		1,800.00
BETHLEHEM	3,977.40		3,977.40
BETHLEHEM	6,991.03	2,461.01	9,452.04
BETHLEHEM	2,810.13	3,360.16	6,170.29
BETHLEHEM	3,418.00	150.00	3,568.00
BETHLEHEM	350.00		350.00
BETHLEHEM	250.00		250.00
BETHLEHEM	6,005.22	7,226.80	13,232.02
BETHLEHEM	860.00	40.00	900.00
BETHLEHEM	604.66	181.41	786.07
BETHLEHEM	1,000.00		1,000.00
BETHLEHEM	1,800.00	600.00	2,400.00
BETHLEHEM	1,800.00		1,800.00
BETHLEHEM	11,581.14	2,834.96	14,416.10
BETHLEHEM	1,132.96		1,132.96
BETHLEHEM	2,400.00	315.00	2,715.00
BETHLEHEM	40.04		40.04
BETHLEHEM	1,732.70		1,732.70
BETHLEHEM	354.72	520.00	874.72
BETHLEHEM	412.97	700.00	1,112.97
BETHLEHEM	1,771.92	700.00	2,471.92
BETHLEHEM	1,121.95	885.84	2,007.79
BETHLEHEM	52.18	481.66	533.84
BETHLEHEM	765.00	415.00	1,180.00
BETHLEHEM	70.00		70.00
BETHLEHEM	274.24	274.24	548.48
BETHLEHEM	126.53	190.20	316.73
BETHLEHEM	438.92	407.25	846.17
BETHLEHEM	11,796.44	4,591.12	16,387.56
BETHLEHEM	2,114.87	1,448.80	3,563.67
BETHLEHEM	102.60		102.60
BETHLEHEM	4,000.00		4,000.00
BETHLEHEM	22,311.31	4,551.61	26,862.92
BETHLEHEM	1,431.50	605.25	2,036.75
BETHLEHEM	2,972.40	3,918.00	6,890.40
BETHLEHEM	689.50	488.94	1,178.44
BETHLEHEM	1,821.40		1,821.40
BETHLEHEM	1,311.34	1,646.60	2,957.94
BETHLEHEM	4,521.34	3,310.03	7,831.37
BETHLEHEM	1,132.57	288.39	1,420.96
BETHLEHEM	100.00		100.00
BETHLEHEM	2,401.48		2,401.48
BETHLEHEM	611.00		611.00
BETHLEHEM	46.01		46.01
BETHLEHEM	356.91	73.75	430.66
BETHLEHEM	2,912.71	1,590.90	4,503.61
BETHLEHEM	257.83	1,194.61	1,452.44
BETHLEHEM	1,187.44		1,187.44
BETHLEHEM	180.00		180.00
BETHLEHEM		1,020.00	1,020.00
BETHLEHEM		2,350.00	2,350.00
BETHLEHEM	390.32	440.13	830.45
BETHLEHEM		10,310.34	10,310.34
BETHLEHEM		368.13	368.13
BETHLEHEM	374.22		374.22
BETHLEHEM	129,561.33	70,281.86	199,843.19
MISCELLANEOUS			
BETHLEHEM	600.00		600.00
BETHLEHEM	22.10		22.10
BETHLEHEM	43,222.13	384,298.29	427,520.42
BETHLEHEM	315.00		315.00
BETHLEHEM	44,387.33	384,298.29	428,685.62
GRAND TOTAL	34,252,159.56	22,394,743.30	56,646,902.86

STAFF CHANGES



1. Collins and family



2. Curtis and family

1. **Hebron Church, Grenada**, has called Greg Collins as pastor effective Dec. 16. He previously served Calvary Church, Batesville, as youth minister. Shown are Jessica Collins, Collins, Sherry Collins, Sarah Collins, and Joshua Collins.

2. Robert (Bob) Curtis has been called as pastor to **New Prospect Church, Olive Branch**. Shown are Joel Curtis, Deborah Curtis, Curtis, and Jennifer Curtis.

3. **Country Woods Church, Byram**, has called Jon Daniels as pastor effective Jan. 1. Shown are Russ, Rachel, Jon and Vicki Daniels, Dayne and Allison Davis, and Reese Daniels.

4. **Center Ridge Church, Carmichael**, has called Leonard Walters as pastor effective Nov. 25, 2007. He and his wife Daisy come from Petal.

5. Keith McElfresh has been called as pastor of **Ebenezer Church, Senatobia**, effective Dec. 19.



3. Daniels and family



4. Walters and wife

6. Timothy Gassaway, a recent Blue Mountain College graduate, has been called as youth director of **First Church, Plantersville**.



6. Gassaway and family

ACTS 1:8 REVOLUTION IS COMING
August 15-16, to First Baptist Church, Biloxi

Bibliocipher

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JND DAW BXFM XP
 AXVDV VAUBB JW
 WIUBDWM KC
 ONMLTWCD, UCM LXM
 DAUD KV AXBQ VAUBB
 JW VUCEDKPKWM KC
 FKLADWXNVCWVV.
 KVUKUA PKSW: VKIDWWC

Clue: V=S

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Psalms Forty-seven:one.

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1. Children's Church group, Jerusalem Church, Attala Assoc.



2. Children's choir in parade, Gillsburg Church, Gillsburg



3. Lottie Moon event, Calvary Church, Braxton

1. The children's church group of Jerusalem Church, Attala Association, presented a program during the worship service.
2. The children's choir of Gillsburg Church, Gillsburg, participated in the Gillsburg Christmas parade. Shown are the participants.
3. Calvary Church, Braxton, held a "Hats off to the memory of Lottie Moon" event Dec. 3, sponsored by the church's wMu. Shown are Giselle and Tommy Creel, Crossgates Church, Brandon, providing music.
4. Highland Church, Natchez, will host the Singing Echoes, Cleveland, Tenn., in concert Feb. 1, 7 p.m.; free.
5. New Hope Church, Foxworth, exceeded their Lottie Moon Christmas Offering goal of \$4,500.00 by collecting \$5,497.68.
6. Pastor J.G. (Buster) Thomas was honored by Friendship East Church, Charleston, on his 80th birthday.
7. The Chosen Children Adoption Ministry and the MSU Association of Student Social Workers is sponsoring a conference on adoption at the Kahlmus Auditorium on the MSU Meridian campus, Feb. 23, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. The conference is for anyone considering adoption or those interested in the topic. Cost is \$20/person or \$30/couple, which includes breakfast, lunch, and refreshments. Pre-register at www.yourchosenchildren.org. The Chosen Children Adoption Ministry began as a ministry of Poplar Springs Church, Meridian.
8. Ebenezer Church, Senatobia, licensed Matthew DeHart to the ministry Dec. 9.

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January is "Make Your Will" Month.

Are your ducks in a row regarding your last will and testament?



Photo courtesy of The Virginia Department Game & Inland Fisheries

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BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

Breakthrough in Confidence

Psalm 23

By Andy Vaughn

The level of confidence we place in someone or something has a great impact on the way we live our life. After three days of flying and overnights in airports, I arrived at my final destination in eastern Siberia. A bus carried me from the plane to the airport terminal at which time I was greeted by a large Russian man pretending to shoot a gun. I quickly remembered the missionary's last statement by way of e-mail, "Someone will pick you up at the airport."

I was confident the missionary would make arrangements for travel, but the man that stood before me just did not fit the mold. Finally, after saying no to multiple taxi drivers, a young couple approached me as they stated the missionary's name

and their purpose. In order to get to my final destination for the mission trip, I had to be confident in someone to make the necessary travel arrangements.

We are constantly in pursuit of people and things on which we can rely. The driver of an automobile turns the key confident that the proper amount of power will be sent to start the engine. Investors place their confidence on a certain stock or fund. An employer leaves town on a trip confident that his or her employees will take care of everything. A husband and wife have confidence in each other as they build a life together.

People must realize that many of the things we place our confidence in could indeed let us down. The car

may not start, the stock price may plummet, the office staff may play while the boss is away, and a husband or wife may do something that disappoints their spouse. Consider the question, "What have I placed my confidence in and what is going to happen if it lets me down?"

Vaughn

In today's world, people are in need of someone they can place their confidence in. God's word teaches in Psalm 23 that we are to be confident in Him as the One that will provide for all that we need and will never let us down.

Psalm 23:1 (NASB) says, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." People tend to allow their wants and desires to determine what they place their confidence in. Fields of study, career paths, relationships, and hobbies often become a source of confidence for the individual that has worked hard for something to rely upon. All of these can be confidence boosters, but David writes about a confi-

dence in God that far surpasses everything else.

David paints the picture of the shepherd tending the flock to illustrate God's care over His children. Psalm 23:2 says, "He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters." The shepherd sought out the finest pastures and purest water for his sheep. Scripture encourages us to walk in the confidence that God wants the best for His children.

God will provide the best employment opportunities for us, the best ministers, and the most loving spouse as we place our confidence in Him.

Psalm 23:3 says, "He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake." Our confidence in God should speak of the restoration we have in Him. God takes us from the path of our own ways and makes us righteous according to His guiding love.

Verse 4 describes the valley experiences that David had in his life. Today, we can find ourselves in the valley which is often accompanied by the fear

and anxiety of life's situations. Although the valley may seem difficult and treacherous, we are provided with the comfort that God will lead us through that tough situation in life. You may be facing what seems to be an impossible situation, but you can have confidence that God will carry you through it according to His plan.

Verse 5 speaks of the abundant blessings in David's life although there were many times he faced horrible enemies and tough situations. Our confidence must rest in the One that can handle anything we face.

Psalm 23:6 says, "Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." God's word encourages Christians to walk confidently in Him every day of life, with our hope fixed on spending eternity with Him. May our confidence be firmly established in the Lord that will never let us down!

Vaughn is pastor of First Church, Fulton.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Do You Trust the Lord's Promises?

Genesis 15:1-6, 16:1-3, 17:1-2, 17-19

By Melleen Moore

The hymn, "Standing on the Promises" is a musical declaration of the writer's faith in God — "I'm standing on the promises of God." The second verse could have been written for Abram, "when the howling storms of doubt and fear assail, by the living word of God I shall prevail." The application is the same for us today. With the preservation of the scripture, we have no excuse of not knowing the living word of God's promises.

Trust the Lord's Word Genesis 15:1-6

God addresses Abram's doubt and fear in a vision. The scene unfolds after Abram has rescued Lot, from the battle with the four kings. God states two specifics — shield and reward. With this

reminder God indicates that He has been Abram's shield and would continue to be while pointing to "your exceedingly great reward" Gen 15:1 KJV. Abram's doubt creeps into focus as he questions God about being childless and Eliezer his chief servant, possibly being his heir. As a custom in that day, a servant could be named as heir to an estate, but if a son was born the servant could not be disinherited as an heir. God restated His promise that "one ... born from your own body shall be your heir" Genesis 15:4 NKJV. Abram was instructed to look up and observe the vastness of the stars in the heavens. I want to think Abram was amazed as he heard God say, "So shall your seeds be" Genesis 15:5 KJV. The scripture states that Abram believed in the Lord and



Moore

God counted it as righteous. The confirming of belief and trust indicates a growing relationship between Abram and God. Warren Wiersbe suggests that verse six is the Old Testament version of John 3:16 stating belief in God. It is such a short verse with profound meaning of belief in God. This verse is quoted in Romans 4:5 as well as Galatians 3:6 and James 2:3 confirming belief and righteousness.

Trust the Lord's Timing Genesis 16:1-3

Ten years is a long time to wait, especially when faced with cultural pressures. Having children, namely a son, was important for every married couple in Abram's day. Abram and Sarai had been waiting on God's promised offspring for years; "I will make thee a great nation" Genesis 12:2 KJV. This was before the trek through Canaan, the journey into Egypt, the separation of Abram and Lot as well

as the ten years of being settled in Canaan. For Sarai the timing was past due for a son to be born. Although God's promise was as sure then as when it was made Sarai, being impatient, made a choice to run ahead of God. Sarai's plan was for Abram to marry her Egyptian maid servant, Hagar. Any offspring would be considered Sarai's since Hagar was her servant, according to customs.

Trust the Lord's Wisdom Genesis 17:1-2; 17-19

"I am the Almighty God; walk before me and be thou perfect" Genesis 17:1 KJV were God's words to Abram as God prepared to make a covenant with him. The covenant to multiply Abram and make him the father of many nations was the long awaited promise of God. Abram falls on his face in awe and laughs with joy while pondering in his heart the thought of a son being born to him and Sarai. With Abram being 100 and Sarai being 90, God had waited until physical limitations had made it impossible for natural concep-

tion and child bearing to take place. God changes Abram's name to Abraham which means "father of multitudes" to reflect the promise of many descendants. Sarai also got a new name Sarah which means "princess," a fitting name for the mother of the multitudes. Abraham's thoughts quickly turn to his 13 year old son, Ishmael, by Hagar. God's answer to that thought was "no." A son to be called Isaac would be born to Abraham and Sarah with whom God would establish His everlasting covenant. God's plan for Abraham to have many descendants was coming to fruition through Isaac and his descendants.

In learning to trust God's Word, His Timing, and His Wisdom, our faith soars to new heights. Warren Wiersbe pinpoints four evidences of our growing faith — willingness to wait on God, concern for God to be glorified, obedient to God's Word and experiencing joy and peace within.

Moore is a member of Macedonia Church, Petal.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) type-written, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will

be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be

clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Photographs can not be returned. Please do not attach photos with tape or staples.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

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Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

THE BAPTIST
Record

JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. Tew ordained to ministry, Shubuta Church, Clarke County



2. Covenant with Lighthouse Mission, First Church, New Albany

1. **Shubuta Church, Clarke County**, ordained Kenneth Rush Tew to the ministry Nov. 25. Tew is pursuing a Master of Divinity degree from New Orleans Seminary. Shown are Grady Crowell, Tew, and pastor Jim Harris.

2. **First Church, New Albany**, and Lighthouse Mission recently held a covenant signing service. Lighthouse is a church plant sponsored by First Church. Shown are Lighthouse pastor Joe Gullick and First Church pastor Rickey Blythe.

3. **Bethsaida Church, Philadelphia**, presented a Christmas Nativity. Shown are participants Matthew Howell, Neely Breazeale, Aspen White, Jacob Sistrunk, Abbi Mowdy, Haley Morgan, and Jordan Smith.

4. Ronnie and Beverly Cottingham of Jus' Jesus Ministries, Inc., were recognized for completing 25 years of evangelistic ministry by the Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists during the 2007 SBC in San Antonio.

5. **Pine Burr Church, Columbia**, will dedicate its new pastorium Jan. 27. Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by a covered dish luncheon at noon and dedication at 1:30 p.m. The pastorium was completed cost-free.



3. Christmas Nativity, Bethsaida Church, Philadelphia



4. Cottingsams

6. **First Church, Eupora**, is hosting Freedomland Quartet and The Hoppers in concert Feb. 8, 6:30 p.m. A love offering will be received.

7. **Carterville Church, Petal**, is hosting Girls of Grace Feb. 23, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. The event for teenage girls will feature Point of Grace and other artists and speakers. Cost, \$15. For more information, call (601) 545-1010.

8. **Antioch Church, Brandon**, exceeded their Lottie Moon Christmas Offering goal by collecting \$4876.56. Children from the church decorated a Christmas tree with an ornament for each contribution made.

9. **Silver Creek Church, McComb**, will present Heaven's Gates and Hell's Flames Jan. 27, 6 p.m., and Jan. 28-29, 7 p.m. For reservations, call (601) 542-0060.



COLLEGE NEWS

1. Samuel Gore, adjunct professor of art at Mississippi College, will present a sculpture demonstration at William Carey University February 12 at 6:30 in the Student Conference Center on the Hattiesburg campus. Co-sponsored by the South Mississippi Art Association, the demonstration is open to the public free of charge.

2. The Storytelling Institute of William Carey University will be held in the Community Room of Briarfield Homes Community February 1 from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m. Sponsored by the WCU School of Education, the Mississippi Arts Commission, Mississippi Humanities Council, Aldersgate Mission and the Housing Authority of the City of Hattiesburg, the Storytelling Institute will conclude a week of activities for children of the Aldersgate and Briarfield Homes Communities. For more information, call (601) 318-6604.

3. The Mississippi Art Colony Juried Exhibition will run January 17 through March 6 in the Lucile Parker Gallery on the Hattiesburg campus of William Carey University. The exhibit includes paintings, drawings, and collage. The public is invited to attend the reception and exhibit. Admission is free. The gallery is open Monday through Friday from 1 p.m. until 4 p.m. or by appointment by calling (601) 318-6528.

4. Mississippi College athletes, scores of other students, and folks in the Clinton community are staying in shape through water walking,

deep water running and liquid abs classes at the MC pool in Alumni Hall. All that hard work is paying off for hundreds of participants and, in the process, MC is again getting national attention. The Florida-based United States Water Fitness Association recently named MC the nation's No. 1 college water fitness program for 2007.

5. Mississippi College's Board of Trustees will have new leadership with Roy Ward of Jackson serving as chairman for 2008. A Jackson resident, Ward is the chairman emeritus of Horne LLP in the capital city. He has other strong MC ties. His son, Rob Ward is an MC graduate and psychology professor on the Clinton campus.



Ward

6. William Carey University's School of Education will host the third annual Young Author's Celebration (YAC) February 1 on the Hattiesburg campus. Three hundred and fifty children, grades first through eighth, from 15 schools are expected.

7. Once a volunteer ready to die as a Kamikaze pilot in the final days of World War II, Paul Tashiro recounted his youth in Japan and his conversion later to the Christian faith at a tent meeting. But his

desire to serve as a 14-year-old Kamikaze willing to give his life for the Emperor of Japan never was fulfilled because of Japan's total surrender on August 15, 1945. The emperor announced he gave up on the war "and we cried on August 18," Tashiro told the Mississippi College Staff Club at a luncheon on the Clinton campus Jan. 16. Many in the audience at Anderson Hall also shed tears as the Wesley Biblical Seminary professor spoke of the compelling story of his decision in Japan to accept Jesus Christ the evening of October 21, 1949.

8. An American political luminary who ran for the White House, former U.S. Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole will be the keynote speaker at Mississippi College's scholarship banquet March 31. For additional information on the MC scholarship banquet, contact Amy Rowan at 601-925-3201 or by e-mail at rowan@mc.edu.



Dole

9. Hardy Church, Grenada, has given scholarships to Nika Diane Ginn, at Blue Mountain College, and Jacob S. Niblett, at William Carey University, both of whom are pursuing an education toward Christian service. The William R. Moss Ministerial Scholarship Fund has awarded 41 scholarships since its inception in 1977.